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No. 24.

London, 18, Aldermanbury, May 31, 1827.

ANTI-SLAVERY MONTHLY REPORTER.

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DISCUSSIONS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE 15TH OF MAY, 1827, RESPECTING THE RESTRICTIONS ON THE TRADE WITH INDIA;—REMARKS ON THE SAME;—CASE OF MISS THRELFALL'S SLAVES.

A VARIETY of Petitions from Leeds, Halifax, Manchester, Birmingham, Blackburn, Hull, &c. &c. for the Equalization of the Duties on commodities imported from the East and West Indies having been presented,

MR. W. WHITMORE rose, pursuant to notice, to move for the appointment of a Select Committee, to consider the state of the trade between this country and India. When the House considered the distress which was on all hands acknowledged to exist among the manufacturing population; the decline of the revenue, which, since last year, was not less than four or five millions; and the decline of our export trade, which in the same time amounted to an equal extent; it surely became important in the highest degree to inquire how these evils could be remedied; and he trusted, if he could shew that a great increase of employment would result, from extending the trade with India, to the weavers of Scotland and Lancashire, that Government would lend a favourable ear to his proposition. But it was not on the actual existence of this distress that he rested the question. That distress might be, and he hoped was, of a temporary nature. The resources of the country could not be so much reduced as to prevent the return of the prosperity it had heretofore enjoyed. He wished the subject to be viewed in a much more comprehensive light. Whoever considered the heavy burden of debt that weighed down the energy of the country, and the part she was destined to act among the nations of the world in the wars in which, in all probability, she would be again engaged, must see how exceedingly desirable it was to extend, by all practicable means, the resources of the country, and to avail ourselves of this opportunity of peace to lighten the springs of our industry, and restore their elasticity. With regard to Ireland, it was evident that every thing should be done that was possible to promote the growth of the manufactures which he trusted had commenced there. The friends of that country, who did not seek to serve it by that course, took a very limited and far from an enlightened view of her interests. Much might be done, no doubt, by settling the religious differences that unhappily existed; but the mere removal of those dissensions would be no panacea for the ills of Ireland, which could be eradicated only by giving employment to the people. When

habits of industry were formed, and began generally to take root. The most favourable hopes might be entertained of the deliverance of the country from the worst evils that oppressed it. After advert-
 ing to the mode in which the Corn Laws had operated to deprive our
 agriculturists of a large portion of their foreign trade, the Honourable
 gentleman called the attention of the House to the increase that had
 place in our commerce with India, since the renewal of the Charter
 of the East India Company in 1814. At that time, the whole of the
 Continent of India, and the Islands in the Indian Archipelago, were
 thrown open, though still under restrictions, to the private trade.
 What had been the result? No man could have anticipated it. It
 was said by the advocates for the continuance of the Company's
 monopoly, that the only effect would be, to increase to a small extent
 the demand for woollens or a few articles of luxury. Nobody supposed
 that the Cotton Trade was one that would benefit largely by this
 market. Yet, this trade had increased to an extent the most extra-
 ordinary. The Cotton Trade had its origin in India. This country
 borrowed its patterns, and adopted its very names. The price of
 cotton was here seven or eight times as much as in India, and we drew
 from that country a portion of the raw material, which, when manufac-
 tured, we exported back to it. Yet, with all these disadvantages, we
 established a beneficial and growing trade in cotton goods with India.
 The term *calico* was derived, according to Dr. Johnson, in his Dictionary,
 from Calcut, "a town in India, where cotton goods were manufac-
 tured, and sometimes stained with gay and beautiful colours." Cotton
 goods were now exported in great quantities from this country to the
 most distant parts of the world where they were originally manufactured. It was,
 he contended, the duty of the House to give the fullest encourage-
 ment to the trade with India. He lamented that he had not the official
 returns lower than 1824. But from those previous to that year, he
 shew that there had been a considerable increase of the trade with India
 since the opening in 1814. In the first instance, he would state the
 exports from this country to India from the Parliamentary Papers.
 The Honourable Gentleman stated the annual average of glass and
 earthenware to amount to 61,526*l.* from 1801 to 1810; and to
 171,452*l.* from 1814 to 1822. Of iron in bars, from 1801 to 1810,
 68,431*l.*; from 1814 to 1822, 193,164*l.* In woollen goods, the average
 value from 1801 to 1810, was 273,414*l.*; from 1814 to 1822, it had
 increased to 376,399*l.*; and during 1823 and 1824, the yearly value
 was 402,061*l.* In cotton goods, the increase was still more astonish-
 ing. From 1801 to 1810, the average was 55,461*l.*; from 1814 to
 1822, 568,358*l.*; and during the two years 1823 and 1824, the
 average was, 1,155,512*l.* He would next state the imports from India
 and shew their corresponding increase. First, as to indigo, the average
 quantity imported from 1801 to 1810, was 3,513,053 lbs.; and from
 1814 to 1822, 5,023,187 lbs. In cotton wool, the average quantity
 from 1801 to 1810, was 5,896,365 lbs.; and from 1814 to 1822,
 23,535,305 lbs. In Bengal silks the average was, from 1801 to 1810,
 438,792 lbs.; and from 1814 to 1822, 899,570 lbs. In sugar, the
 average from 1801 to 1810, was 77,325 lbs.; from 1814 to 1822,
 174,379 lbs.; and, during the two years 1823 and 1824, the average

was 224,658 lbs. These returns manifested an equally great increase in the export trade as in the way of importation. No trade could be more important than that which we thus enjoyed with a population not less in number than eighty millions. The extent to which it might be carried no man could at present foresee. The prospect might literally be said to be boundless.—He would next refer to the duties levied upon commodities imported from India. He believed that these duties were originally intended to be prohibitory. Let the House look at the amount of duties levied upon East India produce, as compared with the amount of duties demanded upon the produce of other parts of our colonies. On turmeric, for instance, the duty is seven pounds per ton more on East than West India; on East India rum the duty is 11s. 6d. a gallon more than on West India, the duty on the latter being 8s. 6d. on the former 20s. a gallon; and on East India cotton the duty demanded is six per cent. *ad valorem*, while cotton from the West Indies is admitted altogether free of duty. On sugar the duty is 10*l.* per ton more on East than West India, being 50 per cent. on the prime cost of the article; on coffee it is 28*l.* per ton more, West Indian paying 56*l.* per ton, while East Indian pays 84*l.* The same disproportion exists in the duty on cocoa. The cotton manufactures of the East Indies pay a duty of 10 per cent., and the silk manufactures 30 per cent., while English manufactures are admitted into India on paying a duty of 2½ per cent. These, and such things as these, shewed the utter indifference to the prosperity of our trade, or to the welfare either of the mother country or the colonies, which characterised the whole system of our legislation with respect to our possessions in the East Indies; as well as the utter indifference to all the principles not only of sound commercial policy, but even of reason and justice, which the legislature manifested in all its regulations of the trade of those colonies. The whole system was most unfair and most unjust; and if ever the people of India begin to feel it as they ought; if ever the vast population of our possessions in the East come to feel their importance, and the degree of injustice with which they have been treated, the House might rest assured that the day of reckoning would then come, and we should be made to suffer as we deserved for the course we were pursuing. What was it which lost to this country the colonies of North America? Why precisely the same principle: we endeavoured to keep to ourselves all the advantages of their trade, and gave them none in return; and the consequence was, that they freed themselves, on the first opportunity, from the power which exercised over them its authority in a manner so utterly repugnant to all the principles of honour, justice, or policy. It was not enough for this country to say it had the power to do these things. It must shew that the course of its policy was founded in something like justice, or expect that those who are subjected to its influence will only continue to obey until an opportunity may present itself to oppose. Such a system was not only contrary to the principles of commerce and of justice, but even to that principle of reciprocity which the Right Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Huskisson) had advocated with so much ardour, and which he for one felt delighted in saying with so much success.—He would now turn to another part of the same subject, and beg the attention of the House to the amount of

the imports and exports to those colonies, as the trade was at present carried on. In the year 1824, the total amount of the exports to the East Indies and China was 4,555,437*l.* In the year 1826, the amount was 4,744,380*l.* Now, he must take the liberty of begging them to attend to a most important subject arising out of one of those exports; he alluded to the article of East India sugar—the dead weight, as it might be called, of what we were able to draw from the East Indies at this moment. He did not take that article because it was the only important one; but because it was that which might be the most increased. He was aware of the state in which the sugar trade was placed at this moment, and that there was more imported from the British plantations than sufficed at present for the general consumption of the country. He was aware, too, that in such a state of things, when there was an excess of production beyond consumption, the price must in the main be regulated, not by the monopoly at home, but the price which that sugar could procure in the market abroad. Granting that, however, he still contended that although the price might not be much lowered by the admission of East India sugar at the same duty as the West India, the consumption might be much increased. He admitted for the sake of argument, though he had great doubts of its being true, that with the same duty East India could not be sold at a lower price than that now obtained for sugars of similar quality. He found, at least, that with this extra duty of 10*l.* a ton, East India sugar was selling in this country, if not at a profit, still without loss. He was aware that it might at first appear, from the supply being so much greater than the demand, that an increase of quantity without a diminution of price could bring no increase of consumption; but did the House take into its consideration the very great increase of demand for our manufactures, the great consequent rise of wages, and increase of population and production, which must follow the opening of such a market for the produce of this country? It might, he admitted, be asked, If the produce of sugar by the West India islands is so much greater than your demand, how can you make any increase of consumption? He took it, however, to be quite clear, that the people of this country did not consume anything like what they might be able to take if a new market was opened to our manufactures. Let the House reflect for a moment upon what was the amount of the quantity of sugar consumed by the inhabitants of the United Kingdoms. In England, the average quantity consumed by each individual is, annually, according to the best calculation, about twenty-three pounds per head. In Ireland, the quantity consumed by each individual is about six pounds per head. Now, he would ask, if Ireland became a manufacturing country by the opening of a new market, and the encouragement of a trade with India, what was there to prevent her people from becoming consumers to the extent of twelve or eighteen, or even more, pounds a head, while the consumption of England also increased? In that way he was convinced that the Right Honourable Gentleman ought to look for the ultimate improvement and happiness of that country; in that way he must look for the means of her prosperity and tranquillity. Let him, by opening the market of our extensive East India possessions, give employment to her people, and encouragement to her manufactures; and he would

find Ireland, instead of being, as at present, a source of endless alarm, and disquiet, and discontent, become to England and her possessions a mine of wealth and a tower of strength. There would be no occasion then for Emigration Committees to consider the best means of transplanting her people to other countries. Let him give but her manufactures encouragement by opening a market, and he would soon see, by its effect upon wages and labour, the people prosperous, and the nation tranquillised. He was told that in a part of that country, Belfast and its vicinity, cotton manufactories had been erected to some extent, and that on that account the town of Belfast afforded a most pleasing contrast in its aspect to the general appearance of the other parts of Ireland. And he understood that when the manufacturers of England had large orders for cotton goods, they frequently sent quantities of yarn to Ireland to be wove up, in order to supply their orders in proper time. Between India and Ireland there were some features of similitude. Both countries were oppressed by a redundancy of population. Both suffered from the low rate of wages; and both were constantly placed in a state of alarm and agitation. White-boyism existed in Ireland; Decoits in India, arising from the same cause, a discontented and starving people. The evils of both were to be remedied in the same manner. Give them employment. Lay open a market to their several productions, and you at once strike at the root of the diseases under which they labour. It was by following up that principle of reciprocity, with regard to our own colonies, which had already been recognised and acted upon with regard to foreigners, that the Right Honourable Gentleman would be enabled to relieve the miseries of Ireland and India, and promote the prosperity and security of the empire.—His object at present was to move for the appointment of a Committee, before which that information might be given under which the measures he wished were to be carried into execution. There was one subject, however, to which he must allude, although it was somewhat different from any to which he had yet drawn their attention, he meant the state of the free trade with India. He held in his hand a letter addressed to the East India Company's Directors, from some persons engaged to a great extent in that trade, in which they complained of the very great impediments thrown in the way of their intercourse with those places to which they were permitted to trade. The Company derived some of their most considerable benefits from what was called the right of pre-emption. They had commercial residents at each of the ports and settlements where the free trade was carried on. Those residents made advances to the factors who bought up beforehand the productions of the country, and by that means contrived so to keep them in dependence as to confine the whole trade, or nearly the whole trade, to the Company. This was one of the consequences arising from that junction of sovereignty and trade in this Company; a junction which never ought to take place, and which never could take place, without exhibiting consequences prejudicial to the freedom and prosperity of commerce.—The Indian Archipelago was one of those places where the trade of this country could be most beneficially extended. Those islands abounded with all the various Oriental productions most in request in this country. More than one-eighth part of all the gold

introduced into Europe was derived from them, in addition to great quantities of diamonds, spices, and pearls. There, too, a vast proportion of the manufactures of this country might find a market, more especially if the ports of China were open to the enterprise of the free trader. At this moment, unfortunately this was not the case; but, he trusted, the time was not far distant when the abolition of this monopoly, which must expire in the year 1822 would enable the manufacturers and traders of the United Kingdom to derive the full and unrestricted benefit of the almost boundless prospect of commerce which this part of the world presented. The duties upon East India sugar were 37*l.* a ton; but the duties on that produced in the Archipelago was 53*l.* a ton; or, in other words, the sugar of those islands was totally prohibited, for the effect was nothing less. It was worth while, in considering the advantages we might derive from a free trade with those islands, to look at the evidence given on the subject by Mr. Crawford, a gentleman whose accuracy of statement was as unquestioned as his means of information had been extensive. He says, in speaking of the possibility of extending our trade in that part of India, "That previous to the free trade, British manufactures, especially of cotton goods, were hardly known to the Indian islands. Since that period the quantity has been yearly increasing; and I can answer, as far as the population of Java is concerned, that it is rare now to see a native of the country, above the rank of a mere peasant, or a Chinese of any description, who has not some portion of his dress of British cotton manufacture, and very often he has a considerable portion of his dress of the woollen fabric of this country." In the year 1814, 1000 pieces of chintz of British manufacture overstocked the market of Samarang, in Java; but in 1818, the price having fallen 25 per cent. 15,000 pieces were sold there. Such would be the benefit likely to arise from an opening of the trade. Give the people but a means of payment, and you may dispose of the productions of this country to an almost unlimited extent. No man, he apprehended, would be so insane as to propose that no more than a certain quantity of our manufactures were to be exported, and yet the effect, by the continuance of the system of prohibition, was precisely the same.—Another subject to which he wished to direct the attention of a Committee, if he succeeded in procuring its appointment, was the state of what are called the *emporium* for our India trade. The emporium of Singapore, he believed to have been established on sound commercial principles; but at the same time he wished the state of that and other places to be submitted to the attention of a Committee, because he thought it would be found, that without some such places of traffic, the trade could not be beneficially carried on. The House might probably not be aware, that there were several productions of the East, in which the trade was under particular restrictions. The trade in spice, for instance, was locked up under one of the most extraordinary systems of monopoly the world ever saw, by the Dutch East India Company. That Company having got possession of all those islands in which the spices grow, and in which they are indigenous, resolved upon preserving their monopoly from all chance even of attack, by confining the production of particular spices to particular islands. For that purpose they se-

lected the island of Amboyna as the place to grow cloves, and prevailed upon the chiefs or princes of the other neighbouring islands, to root up all the clove trees to be found in their possession. In the same manner they made the Banda islands the place of growth for nutmegs, and sent yearly a fleet round the coasts of the whole of the islands, in order to secure the execution of their orders and the perfection of their monopoly. It was true that this proceeding did them no good, and reduced the islands to a state of poverty—but they succeeded in fully securing the monopoly they desired. It was obvious how much benefit would accrue by establishing the free principles of trade, through the means of these emporia, in the seas of the Eastern Archipelago. In truth, the only trade which ever was beneficial there, or which greatly recompensed those engaged in it, was the free trade, before the monopolies established by the India Companies of England and Holland. At that time a trade of immense extent and importance was carried on with all the islands, and even with China and Japan; and it was only the fatal effects of the restrictive system which brought it to a termination. It was the opinion of Mr. Crawford, that the trade with China even could be carried on best by means of an emporium.—He hoped he might not be considered as trespassing too much upon the patience of the House, after it had heard him with so much indulgence, if he said a few words as to the trade now carried on with China through the means of the city of Canton. It was a very singular fact, that although all the purchases and sale of teas were made in Canton, there was not a leaf of the plant grown in that province of which Canton is the capital. The black teas, it was well understood, were grown in a province three or four hundred miles from that city, and the green teas were brought from another province, seven or eight hundred miles up the country. The teas were brought to Canton by land carriage, or inland navigation, and there was an increase of cost of 50 per cent. in consequence. The provinces, however, from which the teas are taken, are maritime provinces, and it was proved that the articles of their produce could be conveyed by sea to an emporium, with nearly the same facility as if sent by sea to Canton. Mr. Crawford, who makes these statements, argues with great truth and justice upon the benefits which must therefore accrue from such emporia, and upon the advantages which such a market must offer to the consumption, without restriction, of the manufactures and productions of this country. To details such as these, continued the Honourable Gentleman, the House must turn, when it is called upon to consider the propriety of dissolving that monopoly, which has existence, by law, to the year 1833. With such information collected by a Committee, must the House be provided, when it is required to determine upon the great question which will then be submitted to its consideration; and therefore, if there was no better and stronger reason, he would contend, that a Committee ought in good time to prepare that information, which will thus be necessary, in order to decide rightly and fairly between the East India Company and the public. For that decision, a thorough knowledge, by inquiry before a Committee, on the state and resources of the Indian Archipelago, was, he repeated, indispensably requisite. He had thus endeavoured to put the House in possession, within as small a compass as

possible, of a general outline of the commercial advantages which must result to this country from an extension of our trade with India; and ~~prayed~~ ^{hoped}, enough to satisfy Honourable Members, that a trade of boundless extent might be carried on, by a removal of restrictions under which our commerce at present labours. The policy had been too long pursued of endeavouring to derive wealth from India by means of revenue; far better would it be to seek to derive wealth by improving our commercial relations with India—by promoting those liberal institutions that create wealth—and by aiding her advancement through the application of those principles which we called into action in our intercourse with the other nations of the world. A change was called for by justice; it was rendered requisite by what was owing to the interests of India; and it was demanded by a due regard to the promotion of the commercial connexion between Great Britain and India. He would not further trespass on the attention of the House than to move, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the State of the Trade between Great Britain and India."

MR. SLANEY, in seconding the motion, hoped that the House would excuse any hesitation or difficulty he might betray in addressing the House, almost for the first time. He considered that the nature of the trade which had subsisted between this country and India, ever since our connexion with that vast and important country, was of that restrictive character which denied to India the fair developement of her resources and the commercial advantages to which she was entitled. The present motion was adapted to pave the way for a subject they must soon discuss, involving the future government of a hundred millions of our fellow creatures subjected to our sway. A change in our system ought to take place, and other principles for the amelioration and improvement of India ought to be introduced, which, by their practical application, might remove the many blots from our legislative and commercial policy towards India. Mr. Gibbon had said, in reference to India, that "the richest and most extensive provinces of the conqueror of the Great Mogul now belonged to a company of Christian merchants in a small island in the Northern Sea." He wished to see that commercial connexion accompanied by those improvements, and by the extension of those privileges and favours, which were so essential to promote the prosperity of nations, and which would show that we were yet governed by great principles; and he hoped that the period would soon arrive, when the seeds of freedom, sown in India, as they had formerly been in America, by the hand of England, would—and at no distant day—bloom and flourish in the very heart of Asia.

MR. LEYCESTER said there were many reasons which induced him to support the motion for a repeal of the high duty on East India sugar. First, he felt bound to support it from a regard to consistency; for what could be more inconsistent than to adopt principles of free trade, in our commercial relations with all other nations, and to deny the extension of them to a country with which we were so closely connected,—to be forging fetters and raising barriers against it in our Indian possessions? Secondly, justice induced him to support the motion; for what, he would ask, could be more unjust than to cut down the English landlord to the lowest point, while he was bound to

pay high prices to support partial interests? It was also called for by policy: for what could be more impolitic than, when the heresy of emigration found advocates, owing to the prevailing want of employment, to shut out the means of extending our commerce, and thus securing new employment? The motion ought to be supported also on the ground of humanity; for where was the humanity of seeing the working manufacturers reduced to the lowest wages, and by enhancing the prices of sugar and tea, by means of the high duties imposed on them, deprive them of the power of purchasing these, and of mixing one drop of sweet in the bitter cup which they were doomed to drink? Besides, the present high rate of duty on East India sugar tended to aggravate the dreadful tax imposed upon us by the maintenance of the slave system, the countenance and support of which were not only shocking to humanity, but injurious to the West Indians themselves. All these monopolies ought to be swept away. It was a grievance, an injury, an insult to prolong them. Lastly, he hoped the measure might be carried for the sake of Ireland; and he would take this opportunity of saying, that he was favourable to the present Administration, and he was sure that nothing could contribute more to their popularity than their support of this motion; for there was no motion the acquiescence in which could be more in conformity with public opinion. In concluding, he alluded to the danger of a non-consumption agreement of West India sugar among the people, if the measure were refused.

Mr. HUSKISSON commenced by adverting to what had fallen from the last speaker. With respect to a non-consumption agreement of West Indian produce, there was no novelty in that suggestion. It had been talked of for several years, without producing any results. Much as had been said upon it, the fact was, the consumption of British plantation sugar had increased in the last year; the amount paid in as duty upon it, covering drawbacks and other charges, was 5,000,000*l.* being more than had been ever paid in one year.—He fully agreed with his Honourable Friend in all the principles he had laid down in his able and luminous speech; and he fully admitted that it was the interest and duty of a country like this, to endeavour to open new channels of trade, and to afford increased facilities to those that were already open. But it was its duty, likewise, in giving encouragement to new commercial speculations, to be cautious not to sanction any measure which may endanger or destroy established interests and subsisting institutions, especially institutions of our own creation, which had grown up under our fostering care, and were specially entitled to our protection. And here he would remark, as to the low wages of the manufacturing classes, that after suffering great and long privations, which they bore with exemplary patience, there was an increased demand at present, which enabled the master manufacturers to give better wages, and to enable a greater number of workmen to obtain employment. But to return to the principles of free trade and the extension of commercial intercourse, dwelt upon by his Honourable Friend, he need not say, that as far as they could be made beneficially applicable, he concurred in the application of them; but it would be allowed, that all great and extensive changes were attended with difficulty, and should be proceeded on, with circumspection, and a due regard to other interests al-

ready established; and that, therefore, whatever new measures or new systems were introduced, they should be so regulated as to involve no sacrifice of essential import from others. In reference to the remark upon this being a tax to support slavery, he (Mr. Huskisson) was no more partial to slavery than the Honourable Gentleman. No man, indeed, could be favourable to a system which was so pregnant with evils; but legislators must remember, that the existing system in the colonies could not be *speedily* extinguished, without the ruin of both masters and slaves. His Honourable Friend had said, that the East Indies were rich in every kind of tropical produce: he admitted this; but he wished to call the attention of the House to the relative circumstances of our trade with India. It first opened under a strict monopoly of a Company of Merchants. We then received from them, under this monopoly, silk and cotton manufactures, for which we exchanged the precious metals, which we obtained by the disposal of our own manufactured goods in other parts of the world. This limited course of commerce was long continued. Meanwhile, in another part of our dominions, the West Indies, large interests had been formed, and British property to a large amount invested. It was our duty to attend to and secure those interests. In 1814, when the East India charter was renewed, the trade, which had hitherto been restrained was opened to a certain extent, and new encouragements were given to individual enterprise. In the situation which he unworthily filled, he, and those who co-operated with him, had taken every opportunity of giving facilities that might advance and improve that trade, and they would continue to do so. But, in all these encouragements and relaxations, it was incumbent on them to take care not to create just alarm in the minds of West India Proprietors, to whose interests they were strongly bound; but rather to seek to reconcile those interests with those of the East Indies, by satisfying them that both may be augmented and maintained, without unduly interfering or clashing with each other. It was his opinion, that the equalization of the rate of duties on sugar would not produce the great advantages which some contemplated from it. He would offer a few remarks upon this part of the subject. The British plantations grew fifty or sixty thousand hogsheads of sugar more than could find consumption in this country; and which must find vent in foreign markets. And it was as possible for East India sugar to find a vent in these markets, as the sugar of any other country. If the East India sugar could be manufactured at so much cheaper a rate than British Plantation sugar, why did it not enter the competition that was open at any of the foreign markets? A vessel might sail from Calcutta, or from any part of the East Indies, and enter into competition at Hamburgh or Dantzic, or any other European port, with the sugar of Cuba or Brazil, or any other country; and if this superior cheapness was possessed in the manufacture, why was it not found to be preferred abroad to the sugar of every other country? He therefore apprehended that the advantages derivable to the East Indies from an equalization of duties would be by no means so great as they had been described by some. But although he did not anticipate such important results as some did from the proposed equalization of sugar duties, yet he was ready to admit that there were many topics touched

upon by his Honourable Friend which required attention, and which he assured him had engaged much of his time. Some difficulties had recently been removed; some facilities had been recently afforded; the removal of some further difficulties, and the granting of further facilities, were under consideration; and he thought the result would be more satisfactory if they were left in their present course, than if placed under the direction of such a Committee as his Honourable Friend moved for. Many alterations in other respects, relating to trade, which the country approved of, had been introduced without such a Committee, and the same might be done in this case. He contemplated, indeed, several changes which might be made beneficially for the trade of India; for example, the removal of the difference of duty between the raw material of cotton and other articles imported from the East Indies and other countries. This was a subject that required reconsideration, and one in which the trade of India laboured under a disadvantage. He would propose, that these articles should be subjected only to the same duty as similar articles imported from all other places. The knowledge and information best calculated to effect these alterations with advantage, were to be procured more easily through the official means of intelligence which he possessed, than through the Committee proposed by the Honourable Member. The changes which it was expedient to introduce into the principles of our trade with India, were changes which circumstances had now rendered necessary. The relative circumstances of this country and of India, commercially considered, had undergone a most material alteration. Instead of being a country importing manufactures extensively from that part of the world, we had become a country exporting extensively to it. In that part of the Honourable Gentleman's speech which related to the making of free ports in India, there was much in which he entirely concurred; and it was with a feeling of great personal satisfaction that he did so, for he had done all that he could to place the ports of Singapore, Penang, and Malacca, on the most perfect footing of free ports. In those places there did not at present exist any obstacle to perfect freedom of trade. It was infinitely better to look to the future for financial benefits to be derived from those sources, and to trust to the increased revenue which the growth of their prosperity would necessarily occasion, than to seek for a trifling temporary advantage by the imposition of duties which, however small, might have the effect of driving away commerce altogether. The effect of the system which had been introduced, as far as it could at present be judged of, was most satisfactory; and what might be its ultimate results upon the trade with China, and with the immense population in other parts of the Indian seas, no one could anticipate. For his own part, he confessed that he was exceedingly sanguine upon the subject; and that he looked forward to the most extensive commercial intercourse, under the British flag, throughout the whole range from the western parts of America and the eastern parts of Asia. It was the duty of the British Government to prepare the ground, to lay the highway for such an intercourse; and he could assure the Honourable Member for Bridgenorth, that it was a duty of which his Majesty's present Government never for a moment lost sight. He agreed in almost all the general principles concerning trade which

the Honourable Mover had propounded, and as far as they could be fairly and justly brought into practice, he was anxious to see them promoted. He admitted that if any impost were proved to be unjust, it was the duty of Parliament to consider how it could be repealed. He was calmly and deliberately bent upon doing justice to the commercial relations of the country: they constituted a subject to which he looked with the deepest and most anxious interest, and which he hoped to bring into a gradual improvement. He wished in every respect to improve the trade in the East, without at the same time sacrificing that of the West. He thought he could see his way through alterations for the benefit of both; but if they were hurried or forced, their advantage would be risked, and his ultimate object defeated. The only suggestion which he wished to throw out to the Honourable Gentleman, was the expediency of postponing an inquiry into this subject until the result of the experiments which were at present trying had more distinctly manifested themselves. He had not the slightest inclination to throw any impediment in the way of inquiry; on the contrary, he was solicitous it might take place; but it certainly appeared to him that it was desirable to defer it until the success of the measures which had already been adopted, and the expediency of extending them, should be more fully ascertained. He was quite prepared to admit, that the regulations respecting the refining of sugar were not of the most satisfactory kind; but that was a subject of difficulty, open to conflicting opinions; still he hoped to effect an improvement in it, so as to satisfy all parties. He preferred, as a general plan of action, to move gradually and progressively, without giving a sudden shock to subsisting institutions, opinions, and prejudices; and he was quite persuaded that, by following that system, he should best remedy the existing grievances. By modifying the laws for the refining of sugar, he believed he should best promote this essential manufacture; but at the present period of the session, he must object to embark in the large inquiry which his Honourable Friend's motion comprehended. It was not that he differed from him on any of the principles which he had advanced. So far from that, as was well known, he was a warm advocate for the application of those principles as extensively and as promptly as they could be applied, consistently with what was due to existing interests; but it was because he was persuaded that the present was not the fittest moment for the inquiry, and that, when they were in possession of the result of what was now going on, they would proceed to that inquiry with a much greater probability of an advantageous issue. The appointment of a Committee at present might create alarm and excite exasperation, at a moment when he was anxious to show the parties interested that the alarm was unfounded, and the exasperation uncalled for. There was only one point on which he differed in opinion from the Honourable Gentleman. He seemed to consider, that to throw open the trade to India would have the effect of increasing the manufacturing industry of Ireland. He was at a loss to see how that effect could be produced. The probability of the increase of manufactures in Ireland must depend materially and principally on the protection experienced by property in that country, and the advantages thereby secured to those whose interests were connected with manufacturing prosperity. He was happy

to say that manufactures had begun in Ireland. He sincerely trusted that they would increase. Many circumstances induced him to believe that they would do so; but he did not believe that any alteration of the law for regulating the duty on sugar would have the effect of affording employment to the population of Ireland—an object which depended on very different circumstances. He would not take up any more of the time of the House. He had sketched an outline of what appeared to him to be some of the most important considerations on this most important subject. He hoped he had shown that he did not entertain the slightest wish to interfere with the progress of improvement, or to prevent the extension of sound commercial principles; but he repeated his conviction that those objects would be best attained by abstaining at present from an inquiry which would be more beneficial hereafter. The time must come when the subject would be more ripe for consideration, and then it would be imperative to enter into a full investigation of all the circumstances connected with it.

LORD MILTON expressed his satisfaction with what had fallen from the Right Honourable Gentleman. He had felt exceedingly anxious to support his Honourable Friend's motion; and if the Right Honourable the President of the Board of Trade had opposed it, he (Lord Milton) should have felt himself bound to support it. But after the fair and candid manner in which the Right Honourable Gentleman had treated the subject, he really thought that a postponement of the inquiry would be more conducive to the object which his Honourable Friend had in view, than its immediate adoption. He thought that the laws which related to the trade with India, ought to be taken into consideration as early as it would be advisable to do so, with a view to such an alteration in them as might be advantageous to the general interests. Upon the whole, however, it appeared to him to be better to leave the subject in the hands of a Government entertaining just views respecting it, rather than at present to appoint a Committee, in which the proceedings might be calculated to produce irritation.

MR. PHILLIPS said he had the satisfaction to state that the manufactures of Lancashire were experiencing a considerable revival. Although this revival had been tardy, he had always regarded it as certain. He did not attach the same importance which many did to the lowering of the duties on East India sugar. The effect of such a measure would be comparatively trifling; but with regard to the trade to India, it was a subject on which he felt great interest. He recollected the time when he had anticipated many events connected with that trade which had since come to pass, and that even cotton piece-goods would be sent from this country to the East Indies. At that period, he had been treated as an enthusiast and a visionary. What had since occurred, however, had proved the justness of his anticipations, and had proved the advantages consequent on an adherence to the principles of free trade. He firmly believed that the exports from this country to India would be much greater than they were, if the existing obstacles were removed and the Company were to pursue a liberal policy. If, instead of deterring, they would encourage his Majesty's subjects to go and settle in India, they would at the same time increase their own revenue, and materially contribute to the improvement and extension of

commerce. Was it not evident, that if intelligent persons were encouraged to go out and settle in India, that the manufactures of that country and its culture too of cotton, silk, &c. would soon be greatly improved? But such obstacles were thrown in the way by the Company, that these persons were obliged to abandon their plans in despair.

SIR CHARLES FORBES thanked the Honourable Mover for the very powerful statement which he had made of his opinions; and congratulated the country and India on the unusual attention which the question had now experienced in the House of Commons. He would not say a single word further than to declare, that feeling, as he did, the greatest attachment to India, he trusted that the great question of its commercial interests would be left in the hands of the Right Honourable Gentleman, who, he had no doubt, would deal with it as he was dealing with all other questions of a similar nature. He had the greatest confidence in the Right Honourable Gentleman, and in the principles upon which he was acting.

MR. SYKES was greatly satisfied with the tone of the Right Honourable the President of the Board of Trade's speech, and perfectly coincided with him in his general commercial principles. He was anxious that some measures should be adopted with less delay than he seemed to contemplate for the improving and extending the trade with India. He had not heard from that Right Honourable Gentleman a single reason which to him appeared to have the very slightest cogency for continuing the protecting duties on East India sugar. He wished he could have heard from his intelligent mind, even the colour of a reason why an impost should be continued, which he affirmed was no benefit to the West Indies, and which he could not deny was a detriment to India and to England. He would take this opportunity of stating that though he was not present at the time, he entirely concurred in the sentiments contained in the luminous speech made by the Right Honourable the President of the Board of Trade on shipping; at the same time that he felt deeply for the depressed situation of that interest. Circumstanced as he was, he had ample opportunities of knowing the extent of the evils which they were enduring; although he believed that those evils were not owing to the relaxation of the Navigation Laws, or the introduction of the reciprocity system. And yet, knowing as he did the distressed state of the shipping interest, he felt that it behoved Parliament and his Majesty's Government to look out for quarters where that interest might obtain employment; and he could not see any opening so likely to be advantageous to the shipping interest as the encouragement of trade with the East Indies. If the duty were taken off East India sugar, a larger quantity of sugar would necessarily be imported into this country, which, added to the distance from which it would be brought, must greatly increase the amount of tonnage that would be employed. It was principally on that ground that he was disposed to press the speedy consideration of this important subject. He did not see any way in which the shipping interest could be relieved from their present depression, except by increasing the commerce of the country; and he did not see any way by which the commerce of the country could be so effectually increased as by opening and cultivating the trade with the East Indies.

Nor did he believe that the repeal of the duty on East India sugar would eventually be injurious to the West India planter, who was now placed in that factitious and unnatural state that all his profits were at present derived, not from the fair results of the investment of capital in sugar planting, but from the mere effect of the drawbacks and profits allowed him at the heavy charge of this country.

MR. ROSS observed, that the whole of the bounties to which the Honourable Gentleman had just alluded, were abolished last year. It ought to be remembered that we ourselves had encouraged the West Indies to look for a monopoly, by the monopoly, in supplying them with the articles they wanted, which we had established for a long time against them in our own favour. How far it might be proper to continue the protecting duties in favour of the West India Colonies, he would not undertake to say; but he thought that the best mode would be for the Honourable Member to withdraw his motion for the present, and leave the matter to his Majesty's Government.

MR. W. SMITH. Whether his Honourable Friend chose to withdraw his motion or not, it was obvious that the argument of the Right Honourable Gentleman, that the duties on East India sugar did no good, and that their abolition could do no harm to the West India sugar growers, was one which cut its own throat; for, if that was the case, why retain the duty on the East India sugar, or why indeed call for an inquiry at all? This was a proof that the argument was not confided in even by those who used it, or, at least, that they laboured under a very great delusion on the subject. If the argument, however, was good for any thing, and if the West India sugar-growers would really not be injured by the reduction of the duty on East India sugar, then let the people of England at least have that satisfaction which they had implored in at least 500 Petitions. If the continuance did no good and the reduction would do no harm to the West India growers, that was an irrefragable reason why the reduction should immediately take place.—The Right Honourable Gentleman had said, that it would be more convenient to enter upon the full examination of the subject at another period. In this way the matter might be postponed for five or six years, till the East India Company came again for a renewal of their Charter. Such a postponement would be a great disadvantage indeed, and he could not see why the matter should be so long delayed.—He had also talked of the five millions sterling of revenue which the country derived from West India sugars; but would not sugar pay the same revenue when brought from any other quarter?—It had been argued that the East Indies were best adapted to the cultivation of cotton, and the West Indies to the cultivation of sugar. But it had been long the impression of his mind, produced by the fullest consideration he had been able to give the subject, that the cultivation of cotton would be much preferable, even for the West Indies themselves. It was well known, that the slave population of the West Indies decreased in proportion to the cultivation of sugar, and increased in proportion to the cultivation of other articles. A greater service, therefore, could not be done to the West Indies than to make it the interest of the planters to decrease the cultivation of sugar, and increase the cultivation of other articles. It had been said,

that we ought to allow the West India planters a monopoly in favour of our sugar, since we had taken to ourselves the monopoly of supplying them with necessaries. But we had now given up the greater part of that monopoly.—If his Honourable Friend should think it proper to withdraw his motion, he trusted the Right Honourable Gentleman would follow up the views which he seemed disposed to adopt with as little delay as possible.

Mr. BERNAL regretted that the Member for Norwich had permitted himself to make the remarks he did on the West Indies. He denied that the decrease of the West India slave population was caused by the cultivation of sugar; and he had expected more candour from his Honourable Friend than appeared in his encouraging the clamour out of doors on this subject against the West India body. It might possibly be that the country would derive equal duties from sugar if brought from other quarters; but at least they ought not to give up a valuable revenue without inquiry. He, by no means meant to deny that at present the West Indians were considerable gainers by the manner in which the drawback on refined sugar was regulated, though he did not think that, with the excess of production above our own consumption, they were gainers by the protecting duty.

Mr. BROUGHAM expressed his high satisfaction at the tone in which this discussion had been generally conducted, and particularly at the way in which the Right Hon. Gentleman on the floor had displayed his own views, and that of the Government, on the most important subject involved in it. He was a warm friend to the inquiry proposed by the Honourable Member for Bridgenorth—an inquiry which would have a strong tendency to give new life to our commerce and manufactures, and afford a most seasonable relief to our artizans and labourers. He, therefore, would be the last man to tender his advice to his Honourable Friend to withdraw his motion, had it not been for the candid and liberal views expressed by the Right Honourable Gentleman, and the admirable temper which he had evinced when speaking on this topic. He hoped, therefore, that, under the present circumstances, his Honourable Friend would feel himself justified in not pressing his proposition. If his Honourable Friend and the House should agree to that, he would merely notice one or two things which appeared to him to be erroneous, and which he wished might not go forth to the public uncontradicted. He certainly could not agree with the Right Honourable Gentleman below, that the West Indies derived no benefit from the discriminating duties imposed on East India sugars. If that proposition were sound it would put an end to the discussion at once. If it were clear that the West Indies derived no benefit from the duty on East India sugars, that duty ought to be taken off at once, without any further inquiry. The very reason for inquiry was, on that hypothesis, completely done away; and, therefore, there could be no need for it; since everything which could be object of inquiry was attained by the admission. It would be the very height of absurdity to continue it for a single day longer, because it would be to inflict serious injury on some parties without the slightest corresponding advantage to any other. They were told that we ought not to compel the East Indies to raise sugar. We did not propose to force them to raise any

thing; but only said, "Withdraw your unjust restrictions, and let them raise what they like." Indeed, if there was any forcing in the case, it was in the effect of the present system of heavy duties on East India sugars, to force the West Indies, by such an unnatural stimulus, to produce them. His Honourable Friend (Mr. Bernal, to whose candour he was always happy to bear testimony,) admitted that our present regulations operated as a bounty on West India sugars; and, therefore, the evil of a forced production, was applicable, if anywhere, to the West, and not to the East Indies. And from our having extended this preference to the Mauritius alone, the only slave colony of all our Asiatic dominions, it appeared as if our system were to give bounty and protection to the masters of slaves, and to withhold it from the employers of free men.* He hoped that they might live to see the dawn of a better day in the management of our colonies; and looking to what had been said by the Right Honourable Gentleman on the floor, it might be expected that that day was not very distant; and therefore he refrained from resorting, on the present occasion, to any of those harsher arguments which might be employed on the occasion. With respect to the East Indies, he could not help looking, with eager anticipation, and very high expectations, to the results of a full and complete inquiry into the commerce and the capabilities of that country, and the improvement in our own trade and manufactures which must follow. He could not help exulting in the brilliant prospects which such an inquiry presented, and to which, in his opinion, it must almost necessarily lead. He was convinced that, upon a full revision of the condition of our Asiatic territories, it would appear that we did not at present at all understand the extent to which the East India traffic might be carried, and that the ultimate effects would be beyond everything of which we had at present any conception. He would perhaps be permitted to mention one simple fact in illustration of what he meant: when he was lately at Lancaster, a commercial gentleman of that place showed him orders which he had received for a vast number of pieces of calico for the East India market, and he desired him to look at Johnson's Dictionary, and there he would find the word "Calico" mentioned as the name of a fine fabric imported from Calicut, in the East Indies. In India, at that time, they manufactured largely of this article for their own use, and exported it largely to us. But now the process was reversed, and we imported the raw material from them, and exported to them the same fabric, but more highly finished, and of a better quality. This was only a small sample of what might be made of this trade, if it were left perfectly free and unfettered. Looking at the matter in this point of view, he was convinced that the investigation would enable the Government to do its duty towards the countless millions of India; while the process would be attended with the double advantage of promoting the interests of the people of India, while it afforded the very best and most effectual relief to our population at home.

MR. WYNN observed, that as British manufactures had superseded those of India, we were absolutely bound, in justice to our subjects there, and in sound policy, to extend the trade with that country as much

* Some warm discussion had taken place as to the Mauritius, which we omit as irrelevant.

as possible. The attention due to the commerce of India, as well as to its arts and literature, had been much too long delayed; but measures had latterly been taken, with relation to them, which he trusted would redeem them from the neglect they had experienced. Under all the circumstances of the case, he hoped that his Honourable Friend (Mr. Whitmore) would postpone his motion.

Mr. W. WHITMORE, in reply, said that he yielded to the recommendation of his Honourable Friends, and would withdraw his motion, and leave the subject in the hands of the Right Honourable Gentleman, who had assured them that he intended to institute inquiries, with a view to remedy what was objectionable in the existing system. He felt confident that he would see it right not to delay those inquiries; and above all, not to think of postponing them till the expiration of the Charter of the East India Company. If, however, he was disappointed in this hope, he should feel justified and even bound again to call the attention of the House to this important question.

The motion was then withdrawn.

REMARKS ON WEST INDIAN MONOPOLY.

WE trust we shall be excused if we venture to subjoin to the above interesting and in the main most satisfactory discussion, a few explanatory observations on some of the statements made in the course of it.

It was asserted, by Mr. Huskisson, that no benefit whatever was derived to the West Indians from their monopoly of the British sugar market. Now, if this position were deemed to be correct, it does seem extraordinary that that monopoly should be prolonged. It cannot be denied that the desire of its abolition is very general throughout the kingdom, and has been expressed in innumerable petitions to Parliament. Neither can it be denied that this monopoly is felt, and that it unquestionably operates, as a grievance in the case of large classes, both in this country and in British India, who complain of its pressure, and who call for its extinction. Under these circumstances, nothing can be conceived more ungracious, than to reject a prayer so consonant to all the recognized principles of our commercial policy, and to retain restrictions offensive and injurious, as well as unjust to multitudes, while it is admitted that they yield no advantage to any other party. It is perfectly obvious, that if this statement were believed to be true, there could be no ground for caution or hesitation as to the course to be taken: it would be both unreasonable and absurd to continue the monopoly in question for a single hour. If it is to be maintained in spite of all the strong reasons which exist for abolishing it, this must arise from a conviction the very opposite to that which has been expressed, namely, that considerable benefit is in some way or other derived from it by the West Indians. And it is some presumption, at least, in favour of this opinion that they and their partizans (among whom we should be sorry to number the Right Honourable Gentleman,) are alone eager to defend and protect this monopoly.

One ground assigned for believing that the monopoly is of no real benefit to the West Indians, is that as more of their sugar is imported into this country than is consumed there, the surplus being exported to the continent, its price cannot be enhanced in consequence of

the monopoly; because the price on the continent must necessarily regulate the price in England. Admitting this as a general principle, yet, we would ask, how it happens, that though the West Indians are now at liberty to export their surplus directly from their plantations to the continent, they prefer sending it first to England, and then from England to the continent, though it thus becomes loaded with double freight, insurance, commission, and shipping and landing charges? This otherwise strange proceeding is to be explained, only on the principle of their deriving, in some way, a very great advantage from their monopoly of the British market. And the fact is, that the drawback on the refined sugar exported from this country is so regulated, as not only to compensate to the West Indian planter the heavy extra charges just mentioned, but to afford him a considerable profit besides, all which must obviously come out of the pockets of the people of this country.

It is a further proof of the correctness of this view of the subject, not only that no raw sugar is shipped directly from the West Indies to the continent, (except in a case to which we shall presently advert,) though the continental ports are open to receive it; but that the whole quantity exported thither from this country in a *raw* state in 1825, for example, did not exceed 200 tons, and was probably not even intended for sale there, being evidently not more than might be required for the use of the crews of the ships engaged in the trade between Great Britain and the continent. Besides this, there were, in that year, 320,971 cwt., or 16,049 tons of refined sugar exported to the continent, which, reckoning (as it is reckoned in the custom-house returns) at the rate of 34 cwt. of raw for each 20 cwt. of refined, would seem to exhibit an export of 545,652 cwt. of raw, or 27,283 tons.

The law at that time allowed to the exporter of one ton of refined sugar a drawback of 46*l*. And if it had required 34 cwt. of raw to produce a ton of refined sugar, this would have been an equitable arrangement. But, in truth, 30 cwt. of raw sugar is equal, or more than equal to the production of 20 cwt. of refined, besides leaving a considerable residuum, after refinement, of both bastards and molasses.

The calculation may be thus made:—

30 cwt. of raw sugar yield about 75lbs. per cwt. or about	
20 cwt. in all, of refined; on which, previous to July,	
1826, a drawback was allowed on exportation of .	£46 0 0
Besides the refined sugar, 30 cwt. of raw yield about	
392 lbs. or 3½ cwt. of bastards: these come into the	
home market nearly on the same footing with raw, which	
pays a duty of 27 <i>s</i> . per cwt. being therefore equal to .	4 14 6
They also yield about 504 lb. or 4½ cwt. of molasses, which	
coming into the market on the same footing with that	
paying a duty of 10 <i>s</i> . per cwt. are equal to .	2 5 0
	—
Making in all	£52 19 6
Now the whole duty actually paid on the raw sugar which	
produced all this was, on 30 cwt. at 27 <i>s</i> . .	40 10 0
	—
Leaving a gain of	£12 9 6
Or nearly 8 <i>s</i> . 4 <i>d</i> . on each cwt. of the raw sugar so manufactured, and	

making therefore a profit to the West Indians, on the whole of our import from the British dominions (120,000 tons) of about a million and a half, instead of the 1,200,000*l.* at which it was usually reckoned.

Such was the state of things before the recent change in the mode of regulating the drawback.

Now, instead of 4*l.* there is drawn back on each ton of refined sugar exported a sum of

£41 8 4

The other advantages of bastards and molasses remaining

the same, amount to

6 10 6

Making in all

£48 7 10

Now the duty paid on 30 cwt. is still only

40 10 0

So that there is left on this transaction, even now, a gain, on every 30 cwt. of raw sugar, exported in a refined state, £7 17 10, being equal to a little more than 5*s.* 6*d.* per cwt.

In having stated, therefore, the bounty to have been 6*s.* per cwt. before the recent alteration, and only 3*s.* since, we have been considerably below the mark; that bounty appearing to have been 8*s.* 4*d.* before its reduction, and being still, as it appears to us, 5*s.* 3*d.*

We admit it to be open to the West Indians to say, that we have estimated the quantity of refined sugar obtained from a cwt. of raw too high, when we state it at 74lb. to 75lb.; but we think not; and if an investigation were only allowed, we are confident it would be shown that even this estimate is below the truth. Indeed, the arrangement of the drawback, which allows 41*l.* 8*s.* 4*d.* to the exporter, seems to assume that only 30½ cwt. of raw are required for the production of a ton of refined; and even if that calculation were correct, the gain would still be 6*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.* per ton, or 4*s.* 7½*d.* per cwt. of raw sugar.

The yielding of 30 cwt. of raw sugar is, on the above calculation, nearly as follows:—

Refined sugar . . . 20 cwt.

Bastards . . . 1½

Molasses . . . 1½

Waste . . . 2

— 20*

If the operation of this bounty extended only to the quantity actually exported, its effects would be comparatively trifling. We should be paying to the West Indians from 120,000*l.* to 140,000*l.* in order that so much of their sugar as went abroad might be sold at a cheaper rate to our neighbours than we ourselves can obtain it for; but precisely in the same degree as the price of the sugar we export is thus lowered to them, is the price of our whole consumption enhanced to us. This effect is inevitable; and the enormous extent to which it operates upon us as a tax, for the benefit of the West Indies, has been already shewn.

If it be said, in reply to all this, that in stating the West India monopoly to be productive of no advantage to the West Indians, it was intended not to speak of the *not* tax, which is a matter that does not injure the East Indies, and only concerns the people of England,

* We do not vouch for the perfect accuracy of these statements. We proceed necessarily on data more or less uncertain. This very uncertainty, however, forms a strong reason for a Committee.

but of the PROTECTING DUTY alone. "If the people of England," we presume it will be argued, "choose, in their extreme liberality, to give the poor West Indian planter eight or nine, or any other number of hundred thousand pounds annually, wherewith to pay for his drivers and his overseers, his stocks and his whips, his workhouses and his gibbets abroad; or for his splendid establishments, and seats in parliament at home; is it not most unreasonable in you abolitionists factiously to find fault with them on that score? Why should you intervene, to stop the free course of their eleemosynary contributions? It is not above a sixth part of what they raise, without a murmur, to feed the pauperism of England. The planters indeed are paupers of another grade, but still they are paupers. Let us not grudge them this trifling boon. It would be cruel to drive them to lay down their equipages; and to abandon their seats in parliament; and to go over to a burning climate, in order to look after their slaves, and to arrest the waste of life which is going on among them. Let us have pity upon them! Let us do as we would be done by!"

Leaving this appeal in favour of the bounty to produce its due effect, we will next turn to the protecting duty. Here we freely admit, that it is of the nature of all impolitic restrictions on trade to do little or no good to those in whose favour they are enacted, compared with the evil they inflict on all besides. Thus it may possibly be with the protecting duty in favour of West India produce. If, however, we were willing to admit that it did no good to the West Indians, the tenacity with which they cling to it, and which we cannot do them the injustice to believe springs from pure, disinterested malevolence, would convince us we were wrong in our admission. They never could contend for it with the warmth and bitterness which they sometimes display, unless there were some advantage to be derived from it. The amount of that advantage we have never pretended to be able accurately to appreciate. But whatever it be, it is at least sufficient, in their estimation, to be worth a violent struggle to retain it; and, in that of the President of the Board of Trade, to be worth the sacrifice of part of his high and well earned reputation for candour and consistency, in order to preserve it to them for a somewhat longer period. Generally speaking, it cannot be doubted, that the removal of this protecting duty, would have the effect of materially cheapening one of the necessities of life. If, at this moment the East Indian merchant can import, without loss, ten thousand tons of sugar annually, though loaded with an extra duty of 10*l.* a ton, it is not to be believed that, if the impost were removed, we should not have that sugar both cheaper and in greater quantities. But independently of this circumstance, which may probably explain the nature of the gain which the West Indians derive from the protecting duty, and the cause of the alarm with which they contemplate its removal, we ground ourselves upon the principle, so fully admitted by the President of the Board of Control on this occasion, that its imposition is an act of absolute injustice towards the inhabitants of India—and we will add to that, an act of cruel injustice towards our starving manufacturers in the north, and towards the starving population of Ireland. It is a singular instance of partiality in the laws which regulate our commercial policy, that while, with such a lavish

hand, we dispense our bounties to a few hundreds of West Indian planters;—we refuse to the myriads of our Indian subjects, and to the swarming and starving population of Great Britain and Ireland, the fair use of their energies, by removing the obstacles we have ourselves raised to it and which are declared to be a benefit to no party, merely because those planters object to this exercise of our justice and humanity. And it is no less singular an instance of inconsistency on the part of one of our most enlightened statesmen and political economists, that he should be found throwing the broad shield of his reputation and influence over such a system.

It was ingeniously stated in the course of the discussion, that if it were true that the removal of the protecting duty, on East India sugar for example, would produce all the results anticipated from it, then it must have happened that that sugar would have found its way to the continent, and there have come into competition with the surplus sugar of the West Indies.—Now even if we could not discover any satisfactory way of escape from this dilemma, we should not the less believe that, if free scope were given to this trade, and if the galling restrictions which fetter the British capitalist in India, and load with imposts the British merchant at home, were removed, the result itself would furnish the best solution of the difficulty. No one understands better than the President of the Board of Trade, the powerful effect produced, by the mere absence of restrictions, upon any particular branch of commerce. This was one of his main arguments in favour of his much maligned measures in respect to silk and shipping; and the result has proved it to be perfectly conclusive. He cannot doubt that it would prove equally so in this instance.

But independently of this general and irrefragable ground of confidence, we would ask, whether it be not true that there exist a variety of impediments to the kind of commerce, the absence of which is so strenuously alleged to be *prima facie* evidence against the probability of a large sugar trade with the East Indies? If so, all we need say in reply is, “Remove your restrictions; set free our energies; and then if we do not succeed, abjure your own principles and revert to the exploded dogmas of other days.” Unquestionably no great trade can be established all at once. It must have its beginning, and its gradual progress. Thus was it with East Indian indigo. At present, the cultivation of sugar, by British capital, has not even commenced in that quarter. The discouragements both there and in this country are so great, as wholly to prevent the application of capital in that direction; and until these discouragements are obviated, the trade must remain in its present state of depression and insignificance. The necessities indeed of the merchant, not his own will, oblige him from time to time to bring sugar to this country as dead weight; but if he were relieved from the burdensome tax he has to pay upon it, he would bring it freely and regularly, and its growth would increase to the full extent of his demand. It is not enough to say to him, you may carry the sugar of India to the continent. His answer is, “My voyage is to London. If I send it to the continent direct I shall have no dead weight for my ship; and if I send it to the continent, after having made the voyage to England, I shall send it under every possible disadvantage, and

loaded with double charges, there also to meet, in some other countries, at least, of Europe, as well as in England, with protecting duties in favour of their own colonial produce. Besides, my transactions are with England. It is there I wish to form my establishments and to realize not only my profits, but my commissions, instead of transferring those commissions to foreigners;—and, if I must submit to send my heavy goods, (my sugar, for instance,) to the continent, I must change my whole plan of trade, and send my light goods thither direct, as well as my heavy goods, form my establishments there, and abandon England entirely.” Many other reasons might be assigned to shew that the real escape from the dilemma on the horns of which it has been attempted to place us, is to be found in the removal of the absurd restrictions which prevent the due developement of British capital and native industry in India; and which most unjustly load with imposts, in this country, the produce of that capital and of that industry.

We have said that there is one exception to the statement that no sugars go *direct* from the colonies of Great Britain to the continental market. It is the case of some estates in that part of Dutch Guiana, which, in 1814, was ceded to Great Britain, and in favour of which a stipulation was then obtained that their produce should not be brought hither, but carried to Holland. This was thought at the time to be a great boon to the proprietors. At this very moment, however, we understand that those proprietors are earnestly pressing the Government of this country to relieve them from this injurious distinction, and to permit them to send their sugars to the British market, the loss to them of not being allowed to pass through that market, notwithstanding the double voyage, being considerable. We have here an additional proof of the heavy burden to which this country is subjected for the support of slavery.

It is a farther confirmation of it, that a practice has recently grown up of extracting from the molasses imported from the West Indies the sugar contained in it, and either bringing that sugar into consumption at home, or exporting it in a refined state to the Continent. It seems right to warn the Government of the extensive frauds which may thus be practised. It is obviously easy so to manage the manufacture of sugar in the West Indies, as that a very large proportion of saccharine matter shall be held suspended in the molasses; and as the duty on molasses is only 10s. per cwt. it is further obvious, that on all the sugar that may be extracted from it, and brought into consumption at home, there might be a clear gain to the importer of 17s. per cwt. being the difference between the duty on sugar and that on molasses. And supposing the sugar so produced to pass through the process of refinement, the gain would be materially greater. Thirty hundred weight of such raw sugar will have paid of duty on importation only the sum of 15*l.*; and yet, when refined and exported, it may yield the same amount of drawback, &c. on its exportation, as we have shown to be derived from the same quantity of Muscovado, when refined and exported, though 30 cwt. of Muscovado pay a duty of 40*l.* 10s. on importation. What is to hinder a sugar baker in this country, having a sugar estate in the West Indies, to import all his sugar, in the state o

a thick syrup, at the low rate of duty of 10*l.* a ton, and to receive on its exportation, in a tinned state, an amount of drawback which shall afford him a most enormous profit.

THE CASE OF MISS THRELFALL AND HER SLAVES.

Being an Appeal to the Justice and Humanity of the British Parliament, in behalf of One Hundred and Twenty Black Men, Women, and Children, whom it is proposed, for the profit of this Lady, to transport from a British to a Danish Colony.

MISS THRELFALL, an English lady, is the proprietor of 120 negroes, now residing in Tortola, one of the Virgin Islands. Conceiving that she can employ them more profitably in the Danish island of St. Jan, where she also possesses land and slaves, than on the comparatively exhausted soil of Tortola, she desires the British Parliament to enable her to transport these 120 negroes from the latter to the former colony.

Mr. Wilmot Horton having given notice of his intention to propose some amendments in the Consolidated Slave Trade Abolition Act, Miss Threlfall has announced her purpose of taking that opportunity to introduce, by means of certain friends she has obtained in the House of Commons, a clause to the above effect.

This project cannot but appear most extraordinary, to those who are aware that the removal of negroes from any British possession to that of any foreign power, for the purpose of being treated as slaves, has been ranked by statute with crimes of the deepest dye: it is classed and punished as piracy.

The statement of this lady indeed assumes, that the prohibition of such a transfer as she contemplates is of a recent date, "arising," she asserts, "from the operation of the late act for consolidating the laws against the slave trade;" and she complains of that act on this ground especially, as "affecting" her interests as the "proprietor of an estate in Tortola," and affecting also "the welfare of the slaves employed upon it."

This, however, is an entire misrepresentation of the facts of the case. In the year 1806, twenty-one years ago, the removal of slaves from a British to a foreign possession was made, by the act of Geo. III. chap. 52. a highly penal offence; and in 1811, it was made a felony, punishable by transportation or the hulks. And the only new feature which has been introduced into the more recent act, of which Miss Threlfall complains, is, that the crime which she now asks the licence of Parliament to perpetrate, instead of being punishable with transportation, may be punished with death.

It is, therefore, not true that the difficulty which Miss Threlfall seeks to obviate is of recent creation. It has existed in full force for twenty-one years; and the only real difference is, that now the offender, instead of being subjected to fine and forfeiture, or to exile or the hulks, may be consigned to the gallows.

Miss Threlfall, indeed, very ingenuously confesses, that she has for years been committing with impunity the very felony described and

punished by the act of 1811. She may not be aware, otherwise she would hardly have made this rash confession, that by such conduct she has not only made herself liable to very heavy forfeitures, but to the pains and penalties of felony.

But whatever may be Miss Threlfall's liabilities in this respect, it is obvious that her plea, drawn from the recent date of this prohibition, is altogether unfounded. And it is equally unfounded, that there are in her case any *new* circumstances, any circumstances which have not existed in full force for the last twenty years.

It would not have been a very modest request, to have asked the British Parliament to violate its own deliberate enactments, even if the object were only to escape pecuniary penalties, and if the subjects of the prohibition were not human beings, but bales of goods. But in the present case, the boldness of the applicant extends to the request that Parliament would grant to her its licence to perpetrate an act which it has solemnly denounced, in the face of the country and of the world, as a crime worthy of death; and to grant this licence, regardless of the feelings and the future destiny of 120 human beings, who are to be the innocent and unoffending victims of its compliance.

Suppose a smuggler, or even a highwayman, were to approach the bar of Parliament, applying for a statutory licence to defraud the revenue, or to plunder a certain number of his Majesty's subjects, and should enforce his application by a plea *ad misericordiam* in behalf of his wife and children, whom with his diminished means he was no longer able to maintain; would there, in such an application, be any thing more directly opposed to *justice*, than in the application of this lady. Indeed her proposition is infinitely more revolting to *humanity*, for it sacrifices the happiness of 120 men, women, and children, for the sole purpose of adding to Miss Threlfall's income.

But we are told, (for it obviously would not have been decent to place the proposed measure on its real ground, the pecuniary profit of Miss Threlfall,) we are told that this removal is called for by a regard to the welfare of the slaves themselves, as well as to the interests of their proprietor.

We will not affirm that this is known to be, but it most unquestionably is, an unfounded pretence.

These negroes are to be taken from Tortola to St. Jan, *because* the soil of the latter colony, it is said, is more productive than that of the former. This, however, will be found to constitute one of the strongest reasons which humanity has to urge against the proposal.

Putting the consideration of general principle wholly out of the question, it now stands proved by the most unquestionable statistical facts, furnished by the colonists themselves, that, throughout all the slave colonies, the duration of life, and the amount of comfort among the slaves, increases in proportion, not to the productiveness, but the unproductiveness of the soils they cultivate *for their masters' benefit*; and also that the hope of deliverance from the bitter yoke of the bondage, is increased in the same relative proportion.

If in Demarara the slaves decrease rapidly, while in the Bahamas they increase as fast as they decrease in Demarara, what is the grand

cause of this difference? It is that the soil of Demarara is so rich as not only to be capable of sugar culture, with all its attendant oppression, but to make that culture a source of large comparative profit to the planter; while the soil of the Bahamas is only fit for the growth of pasture and of provisions, and perhaps of a little cotton.

Again, why does the population even of Barbadoes increase as compared with that of Grenada, St. Vincents and Trinidad, but because the soil of these three islands is more productive than that of Barbadoes, and therefore affords a stronger stimulus to the rigid exaction of slave labour, and to the adoption of that species of cultivation, which in rich soils is most profitable to the master, while it is the most destructive to the life and comfort of the slave?

Every proprietor of a cotton mill, and every post horse master in the kingdom, fully understands the principle on which this apparent anomaly proceeds.—A high profit on the manufacture of cotton goods, will infallibly abridge the duration of the machinery which produces them.—A contested county election will probably kill or injure more horses in a month, than at another time would be killed or injured in a year. The profits indeed of the weaver, in the one case, and of the post boy in the other, might and probably would increase with the profits of their respective masters. So also would those of the negro labourer, if he were a free man, receiving wages in proportion to his exertions. But the negro labourer is a slave, and receives no wages. He is the machine worn down by friction; or he is the post horse excited to undue and prolonged muscular exertion, by the whip and the spur, in order to swell the gains of his owner.

By transporting slaves therefore from a less to a more productive soil, we insure for them, independently of a variety of other evils, an aggravation of the miseries of their lot, and an acceleration of debility and death.

The poverty of the soil of Tortola, is a main reason assigned by Miss Threlfall, for desiring the expatriation of her slaves. The poverty of soil, however, of which *she* complains, is not the incapability of producing provisions fit for the sustenance of the slaves, but of raising articles affording a profit to the owner. This is evidently no ground of complaint to her slaves, as we shall see presently. But if it were, wherein does her case differ from that of every other planter in Tortola? Major Moody, whose authority may be relied upon as to this fact, states the deterioration of the soil, and its incapacity of profitably producing sugar, to be the universally and well-founded complaint of every owner of land in that island. If this reason should be admitted as valid for decreeing the exile of Miss Threlfall's slaves, it may be pleaded with precisely the same force for dooming the whole servile population of Tortola to a similar exile.

If we may rely on the same authority, however, we mean that of Major Moody, such a measure, notwithstanding the poverty of the soil of Tortola, would infallibly prove a calamity and not a blessing to the slaves.

The Major in one of his parliamentary reports, has given us, on the authority of a Dr. Stobo, whose conclusions he adopts as entitled to

credit, the following statement of *visible* property possessed by the slaves of Tortola, consisting of about 5000 men, women, and children, or about 1200 to 1500 families, *viz.*—

	Sterling.
38 Horses at 7 <i>l.</i> 10 <i>s.</i> each	£285 0
938 Head of horned cattle, at 5 <i>l.</i>	4690 0
2125 Goats at 10 <i>s.</i>	1002 10
1208 Pigs at 10 <i>s.</i>	604 0
33,120 Poultry at 1 <i>s.</i> 6 <i>d.</i>	2484 0
23 Boats at 5 <i>l.</i>	115 0
Fish pots and fishing tackle	123 10
Buildings, chiefly in town	700 0
Furniture, utensils, &c.	4968 0
	<hr/>
	£15,032 0

“In the above,” it is added, “I have not estimated the disposable portion of esculents and fruits; and of cotton, raised by slaves. They cultivate on their own account, about 1675 acres of land, which is estimated to yield annually, 3*l.* 10*s.* sterling per acre, in total, 5862*l.* 10*s.* After supporting themselves, the surplus they dispose of at market, *which amounts to a very considerable sum.* The industrious also possess, in cash, considerable sums. I am fully satisfied they are possessed of capital, arising from the sale of stock and crop, to fully the amount of 5000*l.* sterling.”—Parliamentary papers of 16th of March, 1825, No. 115, p. 152.

The truth of this representation of the state of things, among the slaves in Tortola, rests on the authority of Dr. Stobo, sanctioned and substantiated by Major Moody. Assuming it to be true, it affords a fresh proof of the fact already established, that the unproductiveness of the soil, to the master, is not only compatible with the welfare of the slave, but a direct cause of his comparative comfort and prosperity; the effect of such a circumstance being that he has both more land to cultivate, and more time for its cultivation, as well as for looking after his fruits and his esculents; his pigs and his poultry; his goats and his cattle; his horses and his fishpots.

No such estimate as the above can, we venture to say, be truly exhibited in those colonies which are comparatively fertile and productive.

And it is from this state of comparative ease and comfort, and, according to Major Moody, of considerable capital, and even surplusage of enjoyment, that Miss Threlfall would doom her unoffending slaves to an exile necessarily involving the sacrifice of much of their little peculium, and introducing them into a new situation where the soil is more productive, and therefore too good to be freely given to the slaves for their own use as in Tortola; where indeed it may be of a fertility which renders their time and their muscular exertion too beneficial to their owner to be left at their own disposal, without the compelling and stimulating power of the cartwhip.

Of the cruelty which must ever attend such removals, for such objects, we have a most striking illustration in an occurrence which took place in the very same island so recently as 1823 and 1824.

In order to anticipate the passing of Dr. Lushington's bill, prohibiting the intercolonial slave trade, a planter of Tortola, of the name of Pickering, determined to remove thence a gang of Slaves amounting to 300 or 400 individuals. He first wished to obtain from Parliament a licence to remove them to Demerara. Defeated in this object, and fearful that Dr. Lushington's bill would effectually bar the door against any similar transfer, he hurried them off to Trinidad, where it is known that, from the fertility of the soil, slaves yield about three times as much to the planter, while they die almost three times as fast, as in Tortola.

There lies on the table of the House of Commons a paper giving some account of this transaction. It is of the year 1825, and is numbered 156. We there learn that the slaves of Mr. Pickering manifested the very strongest reluctance to this measure, though at first it was pretended to be merely for their benefit and entirely with their consent. This reluctance was not to be wondered at. They were all, like Miss Threlfall's negroes, creoles of the Island. They had, like hers, near connections in all the neighbouring estates; and they had acquired, as it may be presumed hers also have done, a considerable peculium. They were now to be torn from their country and relations; to be driven to sacrifice their gardens and their live stock; and to be transported to a new and untried situation, where they might have to open new lands subjected to a variety of privations, and to treatment infinitely more severe than they had yet experienced. Such at least appears to have been their well grounded impression of the fate that awaited them; and to avoid it, if possible, a number of them, in October, 1823, adopted the desperate expedient of abandoning the plantation and endeavouring to effect their escape. They, of course, did not succeed in this rash attempt, and a body of slave hunters being sent in pursuit of them, they were seized and confined in jail. On the 17th of November, 1823, six of them were brought to trial, for rebellion, before Mr. Porter (the gentleman who signs Miss Threlfall's certificate) and three other Justices. They were found guilty, and three of them were sentenced to receive, and did receive, 63 lashes each on the bare back; and three others 39 lashes each in like manner. It was moreover ordered "that after the infliction of this punishment they should be remanded to jail, there to be kept in close confinement in irons until they could be transported from this Colony; and that they should be banished from these Islands for ever, as soon as possible, to such place as F. J. Pickering should think proper; and that if they, or any of them should be ever found voluntarily at large again, within any part of these Islands, they, or either of them, should suffer death."

Mr. Porter, the President and Judge (Miss Threlfall's friend and counsellor) states that he expected to have been called to assist in forcing Mr. Pickering's slaves on board the vessels that were to convey them to Trinidad; but that after this trial, he says, "I found that happily there was no occasion to perplex myself; for the negroes went voluntarily!"

At least," he adds, "I heard nothing to the contrary!" Doubtless not.

The account of this transaction is bad enough as it stands on the face of the parliamentary record. But a private letter from Tortola, written shortly after the deportation took place, adds to it some fresh horrors.

After giving the particulars of the trial as they appear in the above account, the writer observes,—“The last scene was to see the master going to the jail,” (where it seems 24 of the men who had absconded were confined) “lashing them together, two and two, to be transported on board of a sloop for Trinidad; and I understand they were put in irons on board. The next morning it was shocking to hear the screams of their mothers, wives, (some of them pregnant) brothers, children, &c., who came to town on the Sunday morning to take their last farewell of the imprisoned party, when, to their surprise, they had been all transported the evening before.” “The consternation among the negroes is shocking to relate. All George’s and Martin’s slaves, it is expected, will be sold and sent to the same place.”

In another letter the same gentleman observes,—“I am told that it is said in the English papers that the negroes are glad of the change, and even dancing for joy. I wish it was in the power of my pen to describe those painful separations which have been witnessed in this colony during the last 12 months. From first to last there have been ten or twelve vessels cleared for Trinidad with slaves. God only knows what would have been the result of these removals, if it had not been for the Methodist preachers, who preached submission and obedience to the slaves, and who attended and prayed with them to the last, and as the slaves were Methodists, they bowed to their pastors with gratitude.—An old negro, belonging to Todman’s estate, parting from his wife and children on the beach, fell lifeless. He was taken up and medical aid was called.”

A variety of further details might be given of the miseries produced by these removals, and particularly of the large sacrifices of property and comfort incurred by these expatriated negroes, thus subjected to exile without even the imputation of a crime. But the above extracts must suffice for the present.

Now the precise object of Miss Threlfall’s application to Parliament is to renew, in the case of her slaves, the various horrors above detailed, and the recurrence of which, it might have been hoped, the Bill of Dr. Lushington would have for ever prevented.

These evils, however, dreadful as they are, are but a part of those involved in the application of Miss Threlfall.

The negroes of Mr. Pickering were removed, not to a foreign, but to a British colony, where some regulations at least are in force for the amelioration of their condition and for the ultimate extinction of slavery itself. The negroes of Miss Threlfall are to be removed to a colony which no British regulations can reach; and in which no similar measures for the mitigation and extinction of slavery are contemplated.

The negroes of Mr. Pickering, after being landed in Trinidad, are protected, by Dr. Lushington’s bill, from the possibility of any subsequent removal or separation. The negroes of Miss Threlfall, if removed to St. Jan, will be placed beyond the control of a British Act of Parliament. They may be sold singly to the highest bidder, and may be dispersed, without ceremony, to the ends of the earth; while, even in St. Jan itself, they will continue subject to that cart-whip, of the early abolition of which, at Tortola, some hope at least may be entertained; and

also to a slavery, of the termination of which there is not in St. Jan, as there now is in the British possessions, even a distant prospect.

But, independently of the measures adopted by the British Government and Parliament for the eventual extinction of slavery, and to which no parallel is to be found in the proceedings of Denmark, the probabilities of manumission from other causes are infinitely diminished by the proposed removal. The very circumstance of the poverty of the soil of Tortola, while it has added, as Major Moody's statements shew, to the ease and comfort of the slaves, has also most materially tended to facilitate their enfranchisement by diminishing their value. By recent statistical returns, it appears that the present average value of slaves in Tortola does not exceed £17. 10s. sterling each. In the foreign colony to which it is proposed to remove them in the first instance, as well as in those to which, when placed beyond British jurisdiction, they will become liable to be removed, at the pleasure and for the profit of their owner, the value of slaves is probably three times as much. Thus the obstacles to their enfranchisement will be greatly increased, while their means of overcoming those obstacles will, of necessity, be abridged.

When we have calmly considered all these consequences of the proposed measure,—nay, even if we were to suppose that the poignant anguish of a separation was the only evil attending it,—may we not ask how can the British legislature reconcile itself to the infliction of such sufferings without even the imputation of a crime? We shrink from the severity of punishing even felons by transportation for life, which also, in the West Indian codes, is the punishment ranking next to death; and yet Parliament is, in this instance, desired to repeal one of its own most solemn enactments, in order to enable Miss Threlfall to impose, for her own profit, perpetual exile on 120 innocent fellow-beings.

The negroes belonging to Miss Threlfall, in Tortola, appear to have increased in number. By the Registry of 1818, they amounted to 115. In 1822, their number was the same. It is now said to be 120. This increase, though very small, is still a proof that the circumstances in which her slaves have been placed, (among which we reckon as the chief the poverty of the soil,) and the treatment to which they have been subjected, have not been so destructive of human life as is usual in most of our other colonies, and especially on sugar estates. If this fact speaks in favour of Miss Threlfall's treatment of her slaves, as compared with many of her neighbours, it also furnishes an additional argument against putting to hazard even this commencing course of slow progression, by tearing these poor creatures from the soil where they have taken root, and transplanting them to one which may prove far less genial, and where, at least, they will be placed wholly out of the reach of British control or inspection.

Miss Threlfall, indeed, asserts that many of her Tortola slaves have family connections in St. Jan. This may be possible, and from the vicinity of the two islands, the same thing might be affirmed, either truly or falsely, by every planter in Tortola, without any means of ascertaining whether the statement were true or false. But even if true to a certain extent, it is quite impossible that the slaves of Miss Threlfall can have as many family connections in St. Jan, a foreign possession, separated by

two miles of sea, and still more by the legal and fiscal obstacles to free intercourse, as on the estates immediately adjoining her own in Tortola, and where the intercourse has been constant, easy, and liable to no obstructions. It cannot be, therefore, that many more ties would not be severed by granting than by refusing her request. Besides, supposing there are ten of her slaves in Tortola, who are nearly connected in St. Jan, it would only, according to the average price of slaves in the former island, cost her £175. sterling to enfranchise those ten, and thus leave them at liberty to join their relations.

And here let it not be forgotten, that while Miss Threlfall evidently possesses abundant means of pleading her own cause, and of setting at work various powerful engines of influence among Members of Parliament, and may state the case in the way most favourable to herself; the unfortunate objects of her cruel project cannot be heard. They cannot canvass on the other side. Though their entire human destiny is involved in the issue, yet they have no private influence to bring forward on their behalf. They have no access to the aunts and cousins of public men to exert for them the utmost importunity of solicitation; and though it cannot be doubted that they will find friends in the British Parliament, yet they are such friends as are so on public grounds alone, and are not stimulated to the requisite activity and exertion in their favour by those powerful personal motives which actuate the other side.

It becomes Parliament also to contemplate the effect of their compliance with such an application as that of Miss Threlfall, as it may form a precedent for similar applications. There is no one ground, as we have shewn, on which her request is urged, which would not furnish as strong and available a plea for a similar parliamentary interposition to scores and even hundreds of West India planters. But what in truth is Miss Threlfall's real plea?—It is that her private interests require an Act of Parliament for the exile of her slaves.

If this plea should succeed, it will amount to a virtual repeal of the Abolition Act. It will amount also to a parliamentary adoption of the cruel principle that in whatever part of the British colonies land shall be deteriorated, whence the proprietor ought to be allowed to transport his slaves. And what could be more fatal to the hopes of the philanthropist than to admit, as a principle of legislation, that the multiplication of slaves in any one colony is never to lighten their common labour, nor to improve their condition, nor to favour their enfranchisement; but that when, from whatever cause, their marketable value becomes so far lessened, that the master may, without any great sacrifice, convert them by manumission into free servants, a new exile shall be their lot, and new colonies shall be formed for their reception, till all the cultivable land between the tropics shall be saturated with slaves.

Is it probable then that the British Parliament can lend its legislative aid to enable this lady to perpetrate a capital felony, attended by all the circumstances of injury and oppression detailed above, and which give, to the character of this particular act, a more than ordinary degree of culpability?

An attempt, indeed, has been made to create a feeling in favour of the equity of the proposed measure, by a purposely obscure, and therefore

most insidious reference to a late decision of Lord Stowell, the nature and effect of which the framers of Miss Threlfall's statement have so much misrepresented as they have the nature and objects of the abolition laws. Their arguments on these points are as unfounded as the act they are intended to varnish over is criminal. The decision in question has no more bearing on the case of Miss Threlfall, than the case of Miss Threlfall has on the squaring of the circle.*

In short, the more this case is examined, the more will it appear to be a case founded in misrepresentation and falsehood, and marked with cruelty and crime. And it would indeed be a singular blot on the character of our public men, if that which is matter of current report, but which we cannot believe, should prove true, namely, that Miss Threlfall had succeeded in exciting a powerful interest among members of the British Parliament in favour of her application; and that at least one hundred of these members have promised to vote for giving effect to her selfish and unwarrantable pretensions.

To those among that number who, after perusing this exposition of the real nature of the transaction, can still look upon it with favour, we have nothing to urge. To those who, with just views and humane feelings, have by unfounded statements and selfish appeals to their commiseration, been beguiled into any rash pledge, we would suggest, that if the measure they have promised to promote has been proved to be criminal, and if that promise has been drawn from them by untrue representations, then their course is clear: they are absolved from their engagement, and are bound to give their zealous and decided opposition to the unjust and cruel proposal, into the support of which they have been entrapped.

* The case was this: Eight slaves belonging to the estate of Abraham Chalmill Hill, of Tortola, lately deceased, were seized, on the 26th of February 1824, at Tortola, as forfeited, on the ground of their having been carried from Tortola to St. John's, and there employed as slaves.—The prosecutor, however, laid his information under a wrong Act of Parliament, which did not apply to the case; and on that ground, the ground of the deficiency and informality in the proceedings, the slaves were ordered to be restored. An Appeal was presented from this sentence, but it was confirmed by Lord Stowell, in 1826. On that occasion, it was admitted on all sides that, to export slaves from Tortola to a foreign Colony, except in cases provided for by Act of Parliament, was illegal. But it was contended, that besides the defectiveness of the proceedings, this particular case was provided for, being that of domestic slaves accompanying their master from Tortola to St. Jan, and returning with him again.

Lord Stowell said, If slaves were seized proceeding from Tortola to St. John's he should then know how to deal with the case, but this was a case of a very different description: the proceedings did not properly seize the legal point, and the facts proved led to the conclusion, that the slaves were domestic slaves, legally accompanying their masters, and returning with them.—The law was not disputed on either side. No lawyer could have entertained a doubt as to the legality of exporting slaves from a British to a foreign Colony: the whole discussion turned on the proceedings and the proofs.

